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VIII. *Description of a new Species of the Genus Mus, belonging to the Section of Pouched Rats. By John Vaughan Thompson, Esq. F.L.S.*

*Read March 3, 1812.*

MUS ANOMALUS.

*Anomalous Rat.*

TAB. X.

GEN. CHAR. *Dentes primores superiores cuneati, molares utrinque 3. rarius 2. Claviculae perfectae.*

SPEC. CHAR. *Mus buccis succuliferis, caudâ longâ squamosâ subnudâ, corpore spinis lanceolatis pilisque tecto.*

THIS unique and hitherto unnoticed species is a native of the island of Trinidad, where it is understood not to be very uncommon, although in the space of six years residence I only met with two specimens: one that had been killed upon the property of M. Papillon, behind St. Ann's barracks, and kindly communicated by M. Labarere; the other I found dead on the high road, close by the above barracks.

It is of the habit and size of the common rat, the nose rather sharp, the ears naked and rounded and of moderate size: the feet have six callous tubercles beneath, are all 5-toed, the innermost



toes or thumbs extremely short and small, the whole armed with sharp claws, those on the exterior and interior toes being small in proportion: tail about six inches in length, scaly, with a few scattered setose hairs: testicles in the male very large, and situated under the base of the tail. The two upper teeth (vide Fig. 2.) are placed without the rictus or opening of the mouth, which is not larger than to permit a grain of Indian corn to pass through it. The cheek pouches are formed by a duplicature of the common integuments, open below, extending from the base of the upper teeth to the throat, and as high as the eye and ear: these cavities are lined throughout with scattered whitish hairs, and formed in the same manner as the abdominal pouch of *Didelphis*, &c., not at all in the way described by Buffon of the Hamster (*Mus Cricetus*) and the other pouched rats hitherto discovered. The body is covered with fine lanceolate spines, declining towards the throat and belly into a coarse setose hair, and every where intermixed with a finer kind of hair. The whole of the upper parts are of a purplish-brown colour; lower part of the cheeks, throat, inside of the limbs, belly, and under half of the tail, white; upper half of the tail nearly black.

The habits of this tribe of rats are singular and curious: where numerous, they do incalculable mischief in barns and granaries; for, not satisfied with what they can eat on the spot, they stow away and carry off in their cheek pouches no inconsiderable quantity, to be deposited in their retreats for times when food is not to be procured from without.

The present species, in addition to being covered with spines, differs from the rest included in the same section, in the great length of the tail. Some doubts might be entertained whether it did not more properly belong to the genus *Hystrix*; but indeed,



deed, when we examine into nature with due attention, we find she delights to mock the vain efforts of mortals to shackle and confine her within the bounds of generic characters, which are found to run so into each other as to render all attempts at method more or less imperfect. This animal must remain an anomaly in the family, as that of *Myoxus Chrysurus* amongst the Dormice; both serving as the connecting link between their respective genera and that of *Hystrix*.